

Composition of the Edible Portion of Raw (Fresh or Frozen) Crustaceans, Finfish, and Mollusks. II. Macroelements: Sodium, Potassium, Chlorine, Calcium, Phosphorus, and Magnesium

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ABSTRACT—This report summarizes data from 128 references on sodium, potassium, calcium, phosphorus, chlorine, and magnesium levels found in the flesh of 161 commonly eaten seafoods.

INTRODUCTION

Sidwell et al. (1974) described a data bank that is being established at the Southeast Utilization Research Center, NMFS, NOAA, on the chemical and nutritional composition of seafoods. In that publication the investigators outlined the system that is being employed for the management and retrieval of the data, as well as a summary of the data on protein, fat, moisture, ash, carbohydrate, energy (calories), and cholesterol from 155 references on 154 commonly eaten seafoods.

The primary objectives for the data bank are: 1) to develop a comprehensive, systematic data retrieval system containing available information on the chemical and nutritional composition of fish and fishery products; 2) to publish as completely as possible information on the nutrients found in fishery products; and 3) to point out areas in chemical composition of fish needing further investigation.

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The objective of this second report is to present a resumé of available data on sodium, potassium, chlorine, calcium, phosphorus, and magnesium in seafoods. There is a need in the medical community for information on the amounts of the various macroelements, especially sodium, found in marine animal flesh, in order to calculate sodium restricted diets.

DISCUSSION

Thus far in our literature search, we have located 128 articles that contain suitable data for the elements sodium, potassium, calcium, phosphorous, chlorine, and magnesium in 161 species of finfish, crustaceans, and mollusks that are commonly eaten throughout the world.

Each investigator reported an average figure obtained either from several determinations on a composite of fish, or from a single determination on each of a number of fish. In the latter instance, the scientist reported the average and the range of the results obtained from the analyses. These averages were used to calculate the average and standard error of the mean.

The range of values for each element

in fish of the same species is sometimes quite extensive, as may be observed in Table 1. A portion of this variation is undoubtedly due to seasonal and biological differences, i.e. the size of the animal, its age, sex, degree of sexual maturity, and the amount of each given macroelement in its diet.

Part of the variation in the sodium and potassium concentrations in fish flesh may be associated with the differing analytic methods applied by the various laboratories to obtain their values. Also, freshwater fish tend to have a slightly lower sodium content than do saltwater fish. Sodium content is even higher in crustaceans and mollusks.

Calcium and phosphorous are constituents of the bones of finfish. The bones are generally removed by the analyst to prepare a sample for chemical analysis. It is very difficult to remove all of the bone and therefore the cause of some of the variability in the calcium and phosphorous content of fish of the same species may be due to how well the bone has been removed.

Many species of finfish and shellfish shown in Table 1 have only one or two values, and in many instances none, for a specific macroelement. In such cases, the few values available will give only an estimate of macroelement content; more data are needed to obtain a value which possesses any degree of reliability.

